



**DAILY BREAD
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS
PENTECOST 4 — YEAR B**

INVOCATION

L: In the name of the Father
and of the Son +
and of the Holy Spirit.

G: Amen

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 92

**A: Lord, let your mercy be on us,
as we place our trust in you.**

L: How great are your works, O LORD,

G: how profound your thoughts!

L: The senseless man does not know,

G: fools do not understand,

L: that though the wicked spring up like grass

G: and all evildoers flourish,

L: they will be forever destroyed.

G: But you, O LORD, are exalted forever.

L: The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,

G: they will flourish in the courts of our God.

L: They will still bear fruit in old age,

G: they will stay fresh and green,

L: proclaiming, "The LORD is upright;

**G: he is my rock, and there is no wickedness
in him."**

**A: Lord, let your mercy be on us,
as we place our trust in you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: O God, protector of all the faithful, you alone make strong; you alone make holy. Show us your mercy and forgive our sins day by day. Guide us through our earthly lives that we do not lose the things you have prepared for us in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

READING & MEDITATION *see next page*

PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

**A: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

VERSE OF THE DAY

**A: May your priests be clothed with
righteousness; may your saints sing for joy.
(Psalm 132:9)**

BENEDICTION

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

A: Amen

READING AND MEDITATION:

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost: The work of the gospel is invisible, but real. It is hidden, but with results that can be seen—even if the power behind those visible results remains a mystery. That is true of the kingdom of God, the church. It is no less true of the kingdom of God hidden within the individual member of the church. Has faith made a difference in life, or is it something apart? Faith that is the result of the living seed of the Word is alive and gives evidence of its life.

As you study this week, seek to find the connecting theme in all the lessons by using Luther's Four Big Barber Questions to ponder and discuss each individual reading:

1. *What is God saying to me in this lesson?*
2. *For what does this lesson lead me to give thanks?*
3. *What sins does this lesson lead me to confess?*
4. *For what does this lesson lead me to pray?*

THE GOSPEL: MARK 4:26-34

The field of the city, the small acre of the individual soul, both are brown and dead until the seed is scattered on it. What a waste of time it seems to be! And yet, hidden within the seed is life. It sprouts. It grows. It even becomes a planting of the Lord that is a haven for those who do not have the seed, at least not yet. So again the question begs to be asked: Where are you in this barren field, and where are you as a parched acre on that field? Has the seed taken root? Has it triumphed over obstacles and sprouted? Is it still very young and tender? Is it finally useful in service? Every time you see a plant growing, be reminded of questions like these.

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: EZEKIEL 17:22-24

Do you think it an impossible thing that God could make much of what appears to be nothing? He set the paradigm in his own Son. There is that baby in Bethlehem. There is that dying criminal on the cross. Nothing in the eyes of the world and less than nothing, he reigns from the tree. Yet all who have real life and life eternal find their refuge, their nourishment, their beauty, their life, their all, in none other.

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-10

How splendid, how beautiful the outward and the visible dwelling place that God has given us for a moment, before it decays and crumbles into dust. If the visible seems to us so precious, how precious must be that which for the present is still invisible to which we are heirs. If then we exert ourselves so to preserve and care for the tent, how much more concerned ought we to be that we reach the blessed permanent abode towards which we journey, a home already built and preserved for us by Christ and assured to us by his Spirit in the means of grace. Nothing of the visible tent is sure or durable; only the invisible abides forever.

My takeaways:

**SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON:
JONAH 3:1-10**

Jonah found nothing but pain, despair, and death when he focused his attention on what could be seen and on how he felt about it. He had separated faith from consequent obedience in life. When he finally did what God told him to do, even though it seemed so foolish and so dangerous and so likely to result in his death, then God gave life and rescue through the Word. Jonah was foolish when he ran away, and outwardly foolish when he finally did what God said. The only difference is that God's foolishness always proves wiser than the wisdom of men. So, hidden within our preaching of the law that offends and "turns off" so many is the power of God to humble, to destroy, to kill; and in the proclamation of the promises of the gospel that seem so foolish is life and salvation. May God look down and see the fruit of his powerful Word so invisible to us, and have compassion according to it!

My takeaways:

What major theme(s) connect(s) all the lessons?

**SUPPLEMENTAL SECOND LESSON:
COLOSSIANS 1:3-8**

It is not as though the visible and the transitory have no importance at all. It is rather in what respect they are important: Our use of the little time we have and the passing things lent to us is important as the evidence of the hidden reality of who we are and where we are going. So then, who speaks about your congregation or about you in the ways Paul describes in this reading? Is the invisible faith separated from the visible life? The power of the Word is hidden, mysterious, secret. But its fruits should not be. It is only because of that hope hidden and given in the gospel that we see all things visible, not as ends in themselves, but as means, as tools for expressing outwardly the faith that is hidden within. Don't use the excuse that hypocrites too can do the outward works; that's not a reason for us to do nothing, or to so hide our faith so that no one will ever see it in action.

My takeaways: